

LIKE FATHER LIKE SON

Ken Ferguson talks to Michael Douglas, producer/star of *The Jewel of the Nile*...

He has the same intense look as his famous father. The same walk, similar voice. In fact Michael Douglas is a dead ringer for his dad, Kirk Douglas, but Kirk's eldest son has found his own place in the sun as a top producer and movie star. His two Jack Colton adventures in *Romancing The Stone* and *The Jewel Of The Nile* have made him even more popular at box-offices all over the world.

What he has not inherited from his father is that famous dimpled chin, and Kirk's impatience often spiked with anger on a movie set. Kirk never did suffer fools gladly. And, to a certain extent, neither does Michael, but there's less temperament.

"What I have inherited from my father is his stamina and his tenacity," said Michael when we met at a hotel in London. "I've also been able to learn from some of his mistakes, like sitting back and smelling the roses from time to time. Dad never stopped working. It was drive, drive, drive. Sometimes he'd make three or four movies a year. He was always working. But I have learned how to relax. When I work, I work hard, and I'm afraid my family have to take a back seat, but it's only on the promise that I will spend all my time and energy with my wife and son Cameron when the work is over. And this gives me tremendous pleasure."

Michael's relationship with his father has not

always been as close as it is now. "I guess every kid wants to have his own identity. I knew I did, but it wasn't easy to get the breaks early on, especially being the son of Kirk Douglas. But I got

lucky to land the TV series, *The Streets Of San Francisco* which is how I learned my craft. We did 104 hours of that series and I loved every minute of it. I directed two of the episodes and learned

how to be a producer, so by the time *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* turned up, I was ready."

This time Douglas remained behind the cameras as its producer. The movie, starring Jack



In Richard Attenborough's *A Chorus Line*



Kathleen Turner and Michael Douglas watching the jewel

JEWEL OF THE NILE

Michael Douglas,
Kathleen Turner
Danny DeVito
CBS Fox Video
101 minutes, 1985
Certificate 'PG'
VHS, Beta



You must surely remember a movie called *Romancing The Stone*. It did very well in the cinema and very very well on video. In fact just about everyone who saw it enjoyed it. Many even watched it a second and

third time such was its attraction. It starred Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner and Danny DeVito. It was exciting, good fun and gained a good deal by playing the adventure game to a slightly lower key than, say, Indiana Jones might have. It had a certain witty charm that gave an original edge to an age old tale. As you may gather, I liked it very much.

Well, the three are together again. This time they are seeking *The Jewel Of The Nile* — a little gizmo thought by the trio to be highly bankable but

which, in fact, is a rather scruffy man in a blanket. The adventure is noisier than the first and, sadly, is much nearer to an Indy adventure than is good for it. Perhaps it is the central relationship between Ms Turner and Michael Douglas that really screws it up. They know each other too well and, one might be tempted to wonder why they actually care for each! Danny DeVito winds up with the short end as usual and is there mainly for laughs.

Jewel Of The Nile will do phenomenally well on video and it deserves to.



It is all around family fun without bad language — the norm on American movies these days — broken minds or bodies and is, generally, sexily cheerful. If I hadn't seen *Romancing The Stone* first I would really have enjoyed it a lot more.

Chris Adam-Smith



With Kathleen Turner in *Romancing the Stone*

Nicholson, went on to win five Academy Awards and took over 200 million dollars at the box-office. To prove he was no flash-in-the-pan producer he next put together the superb *The China Syndrome*, giving himself a leading role opposite Jane Fonda and Jack Lemmon. And, to complete his hat-trick as a producer he made that joyous romp of an adventure, *Romancing The Stone* and went on to produce and star in the successful follow-up *The Jewel Of The Nile* in which he again plays the roguish Jack T. Colton opposite Kathleen Turner.

"I made *Romancing The Stone* because I thought audiences needed a movie like this, and because I wanted to do something that was really different from the heavier stuff I'd been doing," he explained. "After producing *China Syndrome* and *Cuckoo's Nest* I was sent all kinds of stories about world problems and diseases, but I was more interested in doing something lighter. For years my friends had been telling

me that I'd gotten away with murder playing moral, serious, responsible, honourable men, and that it was about time I showed myself as the sick young man I really am!" he laughed.

Along came a story about an adventurer named Jack T. Colton. Douglas was hooked on the character. "He was the sort of guy I was looking to play," he said. "Jack is closer to the real me than any other part I've played. But at first I didn't actually intend to star in *Romancing The Stone*, just produce it. I was looking for another actor to play Jack, but in the end it was too good to give it to someone else!" So huge was its box-office success, that Douglas set out to come up with a sequel, *The Jewel Of The Nile*, which takes up the story of Jack and Joan, and Ralph (Danny DeVito), six months after their previous adventure in South America.

Did he have fun making both movies? "Fun?" he questioned. "Well it may look like I'm enjoying myself up there

on the screen, but both have been monumental productions involving tremendous logistical problems. I wouldn't exactly use the word 'fun' — 'challenge' yes! We had a lot of problems making *Jewel*, most of which we brought on ourselves because of the lack of preparation. At times we worked in temperatures of 125-130 degrees. Kathleen and I did a lot of the stunts, but I rather enjoyed running along the top of a train going at 45mph. But for that scene in the catacombs where you see us both hanging upside down, well, we were both quite bruised on our wrists after that. That scene took about three or four days to do. We were also hit with some bad weather, as we were on *Romancing*. And in North Africa it hadn't rained for years! I'm beginning to think that maybe I should hire myself out as a rain god or something. Everywhere I go, rain!"

Another exciting sequence in the movie shows Douglas and Kathleen Turner in an F16 jet, running out of control

on the ground. But where did he get the jet? "Ah, I'll let you into a little secret," he smiled. "We built it! Finding a real F16 jet is another story. What we did in fact was to go to a toy store where you can buy these little plastic models. We took the plans and diagrams and blew them up full scale. The plane was then constructed at the studio in Nice and then transported, in pieces, to the location in North Africa. Looks good, doesn't it! I think that scene is one of the highlights of the movie, with us trying to escape from the villains and driving the plane like it was a car."

Douglas hopes to do a third movie in this popular series. "I'm figuring what it should be about," he said. "But Kathleen and I both want to work together again. Danny DeVito is one of my oldest friends. Back in 1966 we did our first paying job as actors together, so all three of us want to do another adventure. We'll see."

Jack Colton fans will be delighted ...